

## **DR. M. WILLIAM HOWARD**

### **BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION**

*Bethany Baptist Church*

From 1992-2000, M. William Howard, Jr. served as President of New York Theological Seminary (NYTS), a graduate school of theology committed to increasing the capacity of church workers as they strive to make a positive difference in their congregations and communities.

New York Theological Seminary is the largest Christian seminary in the state of New York with nearly 500 students from over 40 denominations and representing the wide diversity of races and nationalities that comprise the New York metropolitan region.

Prior to assuming the presidency at NYTS, Dr. Howard was for 20 years a member of the national staff of America's oldest Protestant denomination -- The Reformed Church in America, and at different times during that same period, he was moderator of the World Council of Churches/Programme to Combat Racism, President of the National Council of Churches, and President of the American Committee on Africa.

His work has involved travel throughout the nation and the world.

Since the early 1970's, he was a leading participant in the movement against apartheid in South Africa, and until 1990, the year of Nelson Mandela's release from prison, Dr. Howard was repeatedly denied visas to visit South Africa by the apartheid regime.

When Mr. Mandela made his first visit to the U.S., Dr. Howard chaired the committee which organized the interfaith worship service at the Riverside Church at which Mr. Mandela was welcomed to New York.

In 1979, during the hostage crisis in Iran, Dr. Howard conducted Christmas worship for Americans being held captive at the U.S. embassy, and in 1984, he chaired the delegation which with the Rev. Jesse Jackson succeeded in obtaining the release of a U.S. Navy pilot being held prisoner in Syria after having been shot down during a bombing mission over Lebanon. These are just two of many peace-oriented

missions in which Dr. Howard has demonstrated his vision of a global society that is characterized by justice and mutual respect. Similar missions have been taken to such locations as Cuba, the former Soviet Union, the People's Republic of China, Central America and the Middle East during the last 25 years.

Innovation and consolidation were hallmarks of his tenure at NYTS. The Seminary was re-accredited for a 10-year period by the Association of Theological Schools; the information systems and technology underwent two comprehensive upgrades; a strategic plan for the Seminary into the next century was adopted; the Board of Trustees was reorganized and strengthened; the endowment nearly doubled; and new teaching programs were inaugurated. Under his leadership, the Seminary entered into partnership with two universities in New York City to offer joint programs with the M.Div. degree in the areas of urban studies and social work. His programmatic initiatives included ground-breaking work related to youth ministry and services to congregations. In recognition of this work, the Arthur Vining Davis Foundations named NYTS the recipient of its Award for Excellence for the year 2000.

In May, 2000, Dr. Howard became Pastor of Bethany Baptist Church in Newark, NJ, the city's oldest Black Baptist congregation, and one of the city's largest.

He hails from Americus, Georgia. He is a graduate of Morehouse College and Princeton Theological Seminary. He holds several honorary degrees, keys to cities and awards from many organizations. He is an ordained minister of the American Baptist Churches. He is listed in Who's Who in America, Who's Who among Black Americans, and Who's Who in Religion. He is a member of Sigma Pi Phi Fraternity and the Council on Foreign Relations. Until June, 2000 he was Secretary of the Association of Theological Schools. He is a past member of the New York City Board of the Enterprise Foundation, and a current commissioner of the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture. His prior voluntary board service includes the National Urban League and the Children's Defense Fund, among others.

Dr. Howard married the former Barbara Jean Wright in 1970 and they are the parents of three children.